

What is claimed is:

1. A cannula having a proximal end, a distal end, and a passage therethrough, comprising a plurality of hollow cylinders that are interconnected.

2. The cannula of claim 1, wherein the proximal one of adjoining cylinders is more rigid than the distal one of said adjoining cylinders.

3. The cannula of claim 1, wherein:
the proximal one of two adjoining cylinders has an inner diameter; and
the distal one of said two adjoining cylinders has an outer diameter;
said inner diameter being sized to engage said outer diameter.

4. The cannula of claim 1, said cylinders being welded together.

5. The cannula of claim 1, wherein the distal one of two adjoining cylinders is longer than the proximal one of said two adjoining cylinders.

6. The cannula of claim 1, wherein said cannula is sufficiently long such that said distal end of said cannula may be located in an internal body cavity when said proximal end of said cannula is located outside of the body.

7. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle having a proximal end and a distal end;

and

a cannula mounted on said distal end of said handle;

wherein said proximal end of said handle is configured to receive one or more sutures for passage into said cannula.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said handle excludes a spool for containing suture.

9. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle; and

a suture guide, having a suture entrance, mounted on said handle;

wherein said suture entrance is observable from a transverse projection thereof.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, said suture guide having an interior bore that extends through a surface, said surface defining said suture entrance;

wherein said surface extends at an oblique angle with respect to said interior bore.

11. The apparatus of claim 9, said suture guide having a second suture entrance which is observable from a transverse projection thereof.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, said suture guide having an interior bore that extends through a surface, defining said second suture entrance;

wherein said surface defines an oblique angle with respect to said interior bore.

13. The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising:
a cannula, having an entrance, mounted on said handle;

wherein said cannula entrance is observable from a transverse projection thereof.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein said cannula entrance extends at an oblique angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of said handle.

15. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle having a first proximal end;

a suture guide, having a second proximal end,
mounted on said handle;

wherein said second proximal end is distal of said first proximal end.

16. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle;

a cannula mounted on said handle; and

a proximal suture guide mounted on said handle;

said cannula and said proximal suture guide defining a gap therebetween;

wherein said gap is optimized to provide maximum suture exposure with limited suture buckling during advancement of the suture.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said gap ranges from about 3/8 to about 3 1/2 inches.

18. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle having a shape that facilitates orientation thereof.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein a transverse cross-section of said handle, relative to a suture or tool advancement direction, is generally triangular.

20. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle; and

a cannula mounted on said handle;

said handle having a surface for slidingly advancing suture into said cannula;

wherein said cannula is aligned with said surface.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein advancing suture is achieved with a thumb or finger.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, said handle having a first axis and said cannula having a second axis;

wherein said first axis is offset from said second axis.

23. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a cannula having a distal end;

wherein at least a portion of said distal end is configured to drive a suture against tissue without severing the suture.

24. The apparatus of claim 23, said cannula having a passage;

wherein said distal end defines an oblique angle relative to said passage, with a distal sharp tip and a blunt proximal heel;

said blunt proximal heel defining said at least a portion.

25. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle including a suture retainer.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, said suture retainer comprising a bore extending through said handle for receiving suture.

27. The apparatus of claim 25, said suture retainer comprising a notch formed in said handle for frictionally engaging suture.

28. The apparatus of claim 25, said suture retainer comprising a grommet mounted to said handle for receiving suture.

29. An apparatus for receiving and passing one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof, comprising:

a handle; and

a cannula, configured to receive the one or more tools, mounted on said handle.

30. The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

a proximal guide, for guiding the one or more sutures, one or more tools, and combinations thereof into said cannula, mounted on said handle;

said cannula and said proximal guide defining a gap therebetween;

wherein said gap is optimized to articulate the one or more tools between respective retracted and advanced positions.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the one or more tools is a loop retriever;

said gap permitting the loop retriever to be articulated from a retracted position wherein said loop retriever is retained in said cannula, and an advanced position wherein said loop retriever may receive suture.

32. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the one or more tools is a hook retriever;

said gap permitting the hook retriever to be articulated from a retracted position wherein said loop retriever is retained in said cannula, and an advanced position wherein said hook retriever may receive suture.

33. The apparatus of claim 29, including a sleeve slidable relative to said cannula between an open position and a closed position;

wherein, when said sleeve is in said closed position, a working portion of one of the one or more tools is disabled and when said sleeve is in said open position, the working portion of one of the one or more tools is enabled.

34. The apparatus of claim 29, including a sleeve slidable relative to said cannula between an open position and a closed position;

wherein, when said sleeve is in said closed position, a working portion of one of the one or more tools is generally aligned with said cannula, and when said sleeve is in said open position, the working

portion of the one of the one or more tools is not aligned with said cannula.

35. A suture retrieving tool comprising:

a handle having a distal end and a proximal end;

a cannula having a distal end and a proximal end, said proximal end of said cannula being attached to said distal end of said handle, and said cannula having a slot opening on its distal end and extending toward its proximal end;

a hook retriever having a distal end and a proximal end, said distal end being configured in the shape of a hook, and said proximal end being attached to said distal end of said handle, said hook retriever having a bend intermediate of its distal and proximal ends; and

a sleeve having a distal end and a proximal end, said sleeve being disposed around said hook retriever and within said cannula, said sleeve being slidably attached to said handle such that (1) said sleeve can be positioned in a first retracted position wherein said distal end of said sleeve is disposed proximal to

said bend, such that said hook retriever can extend out said slot in said cannula, and (2) said sleeve can be positioned in a second extended position wherein said distal end of said sleeve is disposed distal to said bend, such that said hook retriever will be withdrawn inboard of said slot.